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Letter dated 14 December 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Peru, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Peru and Sweden, as Co-Chairs of the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and in close cooperation with the United Kingdom, would like to share a summary of the meeting of the Informal Expert Group held on 28 November 2018 on Libya (see annex).

We should be grateful if the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

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Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations

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Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security

Summary of the meeting on Libya, 28 November 2018

On 28 November 2018, the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security held a meeting on the situation in Libya. The members received a briefing from the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Stephanie Williams, accompanied by experts from the Mission and representatives of the United Nations country team in Tripoli and Tunis. Ms. Williams provided a comprehensive overview of key developments since April, the last time the Informal Expert Group convened to discuss women, peace and security in Libya, and pledged that ensuring women's meaningful participation in the upcoming national conference, elections, constitutional framework and the State that emerges from this transition, as well as all other aspects of the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan for Libya, will remain a core priority for UNSMIL and the country team.

Council members asked questions about the participation of women in high-level talks, the upcoming national conference and elections, regular engagement of UNSMIL with women's groups and human rights defenders, the buy-in of government counterparts and national stakeholders with regard to gender equality matters, the latest trends on sexual and gender-based violence and United Nations efforts to prevent and respond to such crimes, the impact of recent economic reforms on women and girls, and whether the Mission's gender adviser reports directly to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as called for in resolution 2242 (2015). Below are the main points raised in the briefing and during the meeting:

- In the last bout of fighting in Tripoli between armed groups, 120 people lost their lives, including 34 women and children. These included recent attacks by armed militias in women-dedicated banks and medical facilities, such as the Jalaa Hospital for Women and Childbirth in Tripoli. The level of insecurity is still high, especially in the south, where lawlessness compounded by human trafficking and the smuggling of weapons and drugs will make it particularly difficult to facilitate women's participation in the elections planned for next year. Only five days before the meeting, ISIL had attacked a police station in Tazirbu, resulting in many casualties and abductions.

- Libyan women continue to face discrimination in law and practice, particularly on matters related to marriage, divorce and inheritance, as well as travel restrictions and intimidation, which affect their choice of dress, behaviour and participation in public life. Women human rights defenders are the target of increasing threats.

- An estimated 278,000 women are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 150,000 women facing protection issues such as gender-based violence. Some 170,000 women face challenges to access to sufficient health services, and 36,000 girls need support to access quality education.

- The economic reforms announced in September have led to a palpable improvement in the lives of Libyans. Greater liquidity in the banks and a drop in the price of basic commodities are having a particularly positive effect in the lives of women, who were increasingly spending more and more time lining up

to withdraw paltry sums of their money from banks and were vulnerable to harassment.

- The United Nations partnered with the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue to organize over 75 consultations across the country from April to July to prepare for the national conference that the United Nations will host in early 2019, and the outputs of these consultations and online submissions have been synthesized in a report shared with the United Nations in November. Equal representation of women and men in the upcoming national conference will be imperative, as called for in the communiqué of the recent international conference in Palermo and reiterated by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

- UNSMIL supported the establishment of the first Women's Empowerment Network. The Network comprises around 30 civil society organizations and meets regularly to monitor and influence the implementation of the United Nations Action Plan. Women have also been included in United Nations-hosted discussions over amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement. Less than a handful of women from Libyan political parties were invited to the international conference in Palermo, as part of much larger delegations of the key Libyan political actors. Libyan women have been very vocal in multiple forums about their exclusion or underrepresentation. The Peacebuilding Fund is supporting efforts to create a national network of women mediators to facilitate their participation in local conflict resolution and the political track.

- Since May, a network for women in political parties has been formed to increase women's participation and nominations as candidates in future electoral processes. The National Front Party and the National Forces Alliance recently assigned women to executive positions in party leadership. After efforts to increase the registration of women as voters were successful, the United Nations is now focused on the upcoming elections by providing technical advice and support to the gender unit of the High National Elections Commission, the Central Committee for Municipal Council Elections and the legislative committee of the House of Representatives.

- A Women's Support and Empowerment Unit has been established within the Presidency Council but is underresourced and needs funding from the Government and its international partners. The Minister of the Interior recently appointed female lieutenant colonels as directors of the offices for women's affairs and child and family protection, and the United Nations continues to provide support to these matters through its Policing and Security Joint Programme.

- In September 2018, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict visited centres of the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Niger and heard from victims of the trafficking networks that operate through Libya. Sexual violence against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers is committed by smugglers, traffickers, criminal networks, armed militias, and police and guards associated with the Ministry of the Interior. The Department for Combating Illegal Migration and the coast guard have also been implicated in violations. Migrant women have been abducted, raped and detained by armed groups, with some released following the payment of ransoms and others sold into sexual slavery. Sexual violence is reportedly committed also against men in detention settings. The United Nations regularly calls for an end to the arbitrary detention of women and for the presence of qualified full-time female guards in all detention facilities for women. In June, the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya

listed traffickers for the first time, as had been called for in paragraphs 12 and 13 of resolution 2331 (2016), adopted unanimously, on the linkages between trafficking in persons and the maintenance of international peace and security. For example, among the newly listed, Mohammed Kachlaf is accused of selling migrants into sexual slavery.

- UNSMIL is undergoing structural changes and the gender adviser currently reports to the Chief of Staff. A P-4 leads the gender advisory unit and the Mission is currently recruiting a P-5. Both Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General are women and 43 per cent of D-level staff are women. A gender task force meets quarterly to ensure coordination between the Mission and the country team and a monthly meeting ensures coordination with civil society and donors on gender-related issues.

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, as the secretariat of the Informal Expert Group, and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict read out some of the recommendations highlighted in the background brief shared with the participants. These included:

- The recommendations proposed in April are still relevant. These included calling upon the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to report regularly to the Security Council on his engagement with women-led civil society and women peace activists and human rights defenders and consult periodically with them not just on the upcoming national conference, elections or the constitution, but also on activities related to disarmament, counter-terrorism, security plans, human rights, reconstruction, the design of public service delivery and the provision of humanitarian assistance. Others called for a comprehensive disarmament strategy to include a gender perspective and the participation of women; the Government to adopt quotas to ensure a minimum of 30 per cent representation of women in all governance bodies, including those emerging from the political transition; and the Government to protect women migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, detainees, peace activists and human rights defenders who may be particularly targeted, and implement large-scale programmes for the psychosocial and economic rehabilitation of women and girls affected by the conflict, such as sexual violence survivors, women and girls disabled because of the war and ongoing insecurity, or affected by displacement, arbitrary detention and the loss of family members.

- The Security Council must follow up on the implementation of resolutions 2434 (2018) and 2441 (2018), which contain clear mandates on women, peace and security for both the Mission and the sanctions regime. Council members can review recommendations for listing put forward by the Panel of Experts and consider designating individuals for sanctions, including on the basis of paragraph 11 of resolution 2441 (2018). Furthermore, Council members should ask about the level of relevant expertise currently available in the Mission and the Panel of Experts and address any gaps, and insist on full cooperation with the International Criminal Court and its investigation into sexual violence. For example, it is important that the UNSMIL senior gender adviser report directly to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as in other missions and as called for in resolution 2242 (2015). It is also important to deploy women protection advisers to accelerate the implementation of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence. The Informal Expert Group Co-Chairs could ask the United Nations and the Government for an update on the implementation of previous government decrees on reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

- In upcoming meetings on Libya, Council members should ask the United Nations about the availability of gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated data to effectively mainstream gender into its analysis and implementation of the United Nations Action Plan for Libya, and publicly condemn any threats or attacks against women human rights defenders, which should be promptly and credibly investigated and prosecuted.

The Co-Chairs closed the meeting, thanking Ms. Williams, UNSMIL and the United Nations country team for their participation, and committed to following up on the recommendations.